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Governmental Double-Dipping

Taxpayers who are currently muttering unkind words about CIA Director Stansfield Turner because of his decision to retire Dec. 31 from the U.S. Navy instead of waiting a few weeks longer should be mad not at the man but at the system.

Because of the timing of his retirement, Turner boosted his total government income to nearly \$31,000 a year. A \$23,390-a-year government pension is now his on top of his \$57,500 salary as head of the CIA.

The trick, and the reason so many people including the National Taxpayers Union are mad at Turner, is that if he had waited until Friday, Jan. 12 to retire he would have had to forfeit the pension while in his present government job.

Last year Congress placed a ceiling of \$47,500 on the combined federal pay plus federal pension future military retirees can receive. This law went into effect Thursday.

According to Sid Taylor of the NTU, this sort of "double-dipping" costs Americans about \$1 billion a year in added pension costs. Taylor terms this "a fiscal outrage against the American taxpayer in view of the so-called war on inflation..."

We tend to agree, but let's at least be thankful for the new law which will prevent more retirees from adding to the taxpayers' costs. Turner did nothing anyone else with the same opportunity would not have done — especially a federal employee whose job does not depend on the vote of the taxpayers.